

Christopher's Classics 2022 – Series XXVII

Reviewer Tony Ryan looks forward to the tantalising, expanded programme for 2022

With a few modifications of date, programme and personnel, Christopher's Classics in 2020 and 2021 have been a life-saver for Christchurch concert-goers. For 2022, an ambitious ten-concert schedule with top-line New Zealand musicians and even more affordable ticket prices comes as a much-needed booster dose of musical excellence after the uncertainties of these last two years.

2022's CHRISTOPHER MARSHALL CONCERT (which proved to be a highlight of the 2021 series) this time features baritone [Will King](#) in a recital of English and French songs accompanied by David Codd. The programme includes Britten's wonderful *Songs and Proverbs of William Blake*, which I'm especially looking forward to. Will King has already made a notably favourable impression on those who have heard him recently so, apart from this welcome opportunity of having a singer in the 2022 season, I'm very much looking forward to hearing this rising star in the Christopher's Classics opening concert in March.

PIANO TRIO ENSEMBLES are quite a thematic thread running through the 2022 series. Three such groups can be heard in April, June and July; four if you count the welcome return of the [Morton Trio](#), also in July, with French horn replacing the cello of the other ensembles. The very wide range of repertoire that these trios are scheduled to play easily justifies their inclusion in this expanded season, and it will make for some fascinating comparisons as the different personalities bring their individual insights to the music-making. All three of the standard ensembles will include works by New Zealand composers: in July the **Levansa Trio** will play *Ultraviolet* by Claire Cowan, while both the [NZ Chamber Soloists](#) and the [NZTrio](#) will première new commissions whose details are yet to be announced. The NZ Chamber Soloists' programme is a very innovative mix of New Zealand-Chinese-American works along with Shostakovich's rarely heard *First Piano Trio*, and I'm rather excited to see that NZTrio's programme also includes a work by Nikolai Kapustin, who died just last year at the age of 82, and whose music has been receiving increasing attention in recent years. Another interesting feature of these concerts is that NZTrio and Levansa Trio will each include a Beethoven *Piano Trio*, which just happen to be the same two that the Argyle Trio played in the 2021 series – so this will make another fascinating comparison; it's always intriguing to hear the diversity of approaches as different musicians bring their own individual vision to the music, especially the great *Archduke Trio* which is always a favourite.

PIANIST LIAM WOODING, who appears in July with the Morton Trio, returns in September with an enticing solo programme of Mozart, Bach-Busoni, Prokofiev (the quirky and inventive *Vision Fugitives*) and a *Sonata* by Australian composer Carl Vine. The inclusion of the occasional solo musician in the Christopher's Classics series is always a welcome feature.

TWO STRING ENSEMBLES are scheduled for August and September. The [Aroha String Quartet](#) have an appealing programme of Mendelssohn, Brahms and John Psathas, along with a real favourite of mine – Shostakovich's *Tenth String Quartet*. **Strings Amore** is the other string group, which comprises five of New Zealand's finest players in a programme of baroque works by Vivaldi, Graupner, Telemann and Bach. This concert features Donald Maurice on viola d'amore, one of the baroque era's most exquisitely beautiful and favourite instruments.

TWO DUOS complete the 2022 line-up. In May the [Darroch Cowan Duo](#) bring a collection of pieces for flute and guitar by composers from both North and South America, while the 2022 series ends in October with a programme of songs arranged for cello and piano from originals by Schubert, Glazunov, Dvořák, Schumann and Brahms. For this concert **Andrew Joyce and Rae de Lisle** will no doubt be reprising some of the tracks that we often hear on RNZ Concert from their album *Morgen* released in 2020, although that disc doesn't include Glazunov. Personally, such arrangements of well-known vocal gems have the effect of making me wish for the originals with all the textual expression and tension that only the human voice can deliver. However, the cello is far

more suitable for such instrumental alternatives than the interminable flute or clarinet arrangements that seem prevalent and, depending what the year throws at us, I may well be ready for some good easy-to-listen-to tunes, so I do look forward to this opportunity to hear two such fine musicians as the icing on the cake in what looks like a series of enormous variety and tantalising repertoire.